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A. Kell McInnis III

he 1991 Legislature dealt with many matters affecting the department and sportsmen.

The department's Black Bass Management Plan emerged unchanged. We now have an intensive management formula that affords fishermen opportunities for both trophy, and simply better, fishing experiences.

Red Drum (Redfish) gained "game fish" status and the department was given full management and regulatory authority over Red Drum and Spotted Sea Trout (Speckled Trout).

The Legislature also approved "Lifetime" hunting and fishing licenses to be available at a one time cost of $300 or $500 for a lifetime combination license. Sportsmen under 13 will receive a discount of $100 for a single license or $200 for the combination.

Another measure funded a new "sales card" for commercial fishermen by increasing the saltwater gill net fee to $250 for residents and $1,000 for non-residents. The small cards will provide a receipt system for transactions between fishermen and wholesale-retail dealers and a method for the department to track species and amounts of fish sold. This will allow monitoring quotas and long term harvest trends.

Several bills sought to change the proposed deer hunting regulations, but were defeated. The 1991-92 deer seasons will proceed as announced, with only minor changes. Final details are available from any Wildlife and Fisheries office.

The Legislature also included Bayou Choupique (Calcasieu), Bayou Choudrant (Lincoln/Ouachita), Bayou Toro (Vernon/Sabine) and portions of the Bogue Falaya River (Washington/St. Tammany) and Calcasieu River (Whiskey Chitto to Moss Bluff) in the Natural and Scenic Rivers System.

A special Task Force was also created to study reptile and amphibian trade, including educational, scientific and pet trade usage together with possible licensing and harvest regulation.

In action affecting the alligator industry, the Legislature created a fund to support the department's Alligator Management Program. Other bills deleted the requirement for a special permit to sell skins under four feet in length and added a requirement that breeders and exhibitors file an annual report on status and disposition of animals even if they are not renewing a license.

There were also significant regulatory changes enacted. Those are highlighted by Captain Keith LaCaze in the Lawlines section of this issue.

The Department was very busy during this legislative session, and that in itself is a continuing source of disappointment. We tracked more than 200 bills that potentially would have affected the department. The resources, in staff time, needed to manage such an effort are massive. Although the department and commission have almost complete regulatory authority, bills are filed each year which duplicate effort by attempts to micro and macro manage our fish and wildlife resources.

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Teal memories

It's been four years. Still, the hole in our outdoor agenda remains unfillable.

BY HUMBERTO FONTOVA

The first cold front of the year pushed through last night. You know what that does to your spirits after the four-month steam bath of a Louisiana summer. You probably also know what it does to the tides in the coastal marshes—sends them tumbling. And for the past two weeks the winds have been howling out of the southeast. So there is a lot of tide to tumble.

Flooded marsh with a falling tide in September—a fisherman's dream. The redfish are on a rampage.

My cork is still bobbing after my first cast when on the verge of a pop, it vanishes. I strike back into something solid and, just when I think I've hooked up on an oyster, the water erupts in a copper swirl. My reel starts wailing and a wild whoop tears from my lungs.

"Told you!" I whoop. "That grass point by the oyster pole...redfish love it!" I look behind me, eager to watch my brother's reaction to the first fish of the day when I spot them.

About a dozen teal. Blue patches gleaming as the sun hits them from behind. They make a quick circle, buzz low over the marsh, another sharp circle, and plop into the grass. For a minute I forget all about the redfish.

My mind gropes back to the file labeled "September 18, 1981." I'm back in teal season. Weather like today's was a blessing for teal hunters. The temperature is in the high 50s. Wind from the north at 18 miles per hour, the rousseaus dipping with each gust. Even the cordgrass and duck potato wave frantically, and the hyacinths are conveniently stacked against the windward bank.

* * *

My brother, father and I were paddling across a cove to the little pond, actually more of a puddle, that we'd staked out for teal and, in late winter, for mallards and mottled ducks.

It was 7 a.m. and the sky an immaculate blue canopy. We always set up after daylight for teal. Limits were a certainty and we figured we might as well get a decent night's sleep. Of course it never happened. The sleep that is. After 3 a.m. it was always a series of fitful catnaps: tossing and turning, peeking at the clock every 10 minutes, a hollow churning stomach, mind racing with images of past hunts, gear that might be forgotten and anticipation of what lay ahead.

Bands of teal were buzzing over the marsh in all directions. Higher up, pintail flapped along in ragged groups. We could have probably stopped right there, and without tossing out a single decoy, shot a limit in 10 minutes. But such a thing was unthinkable. Duck hunting meant decoys. And it meant work. And we weren't about to spoil it by getting it over with in 10 minutes by pass-shooting teal 200 feet from the boat. That was no way to treat something we had been looking forward to since last January 17th.

"Man, look at the teal! Come on, let's set up right here!" my brother called out from his pirogue.

"No! Look at 'em buzzing our pond. Let's get in there!"

"The heck with the pond! They're everywhere!" he shot back.

I gave in. Three of us hunting together made it last longer. By myself, I might get a limit with one or two flocks. Here I'd watch dozens buzz in before we took a three-man limit. And isn't watching them what it's all about...almost?

With teal buzzing our heads every few seconds we were getting frantic. Only eight decoys went out. We pushed the pirogues into the bulrushes, stood knee deep in water in chest high cordgrass and took in what must

When the first early autumn cool front moves in, duck hunters wax nostalgic for the days of teal hunting, a season with a flavor all its own.

The teal season was different from the main event to follow two months later. But it was every bit as magnetic.

Teal season provided its own form of excitement. There were no numb fingers, watery eyes, wary mallards, pintail and grays, green wings in massive bands. But there was furious shooting and the fishing afterwards.

have greeted the market hunters earlier in this century. Ducks were everywhere.

"On the left...three of' em!" On reflex, we all ducked and I felt the water pour in the back of my hip boots. In January I'd be worried. That day, it was actually refreshing.

"Those are blacks, man," my brother hissed.

"So what? Let's watch 'em come in." As always, the blacks (technically mottled ducks) were as big a visual attraction as the teal. And here, along with a smattering of pintail and grays, they were at their very dumbest.

I let fly with a hail call, a wretched wail that was all squeaks and wounded notes. But the three blacks turned, saw the decoys and came in as if hypnotized. We watched from a half crouch as they went through the motions. Wings cupped, necks craning, they glided in. With a little wagging of the wings, they plopped down on the edge of the decoys.

My brother looked over with a smirk. "Why don't they ever do this during the big season?" he whispered. Then we actually had to stand and wave for them to lift off.

Teal don't seem to mind standing hunters. Four blazed in from the left and plopped in the decoys before we could even aim. Three shotguns were aimed and waiting for them to lift. Three shotguns blasted six times when they sprang into the air. Four teal flapped away.

"Impossible!" I screeched.

"It's these cheap shells you bought me!" my brother spat.

But there wasn't much time for grumbling. A bigger flock was blazing in from the right. You know teal. You see them out about 200 yards, maybe you give a short hail. They see your decoys, turn, and you know they're coming in. I looked at the faces to either side of me, they looked back and we had to stifle a guffaw. After eight months it was staring us in the face. And it was almost too much for the nervous system.

They were on the far edge of the decoys, but with teal it was time to rise—get the jump on them or they would swoop right over us too fast for a shot. Up came the guns and 15 teal rocketed skyward. Mass confusion erupted as I tried to pick one out for a shot. Too many!

I couldn't decide. Six shots raked the air and the flock scattered in all directions.

* * *

It's been four years, but for some of us the hole in our outdoor agenda remains unfillable. For many the teal season was simply a warm up exercise—a pre-season scrimmage to get the kinks out of the system for the big ducks. But I found it to have a flavor all its own. A flavor totally different from the main feature two months later but every bit as magnetic.

True, there were no steel gray skies, numb fingers, watery eyes, wary mallards, pintail and grays, green wings in massive bands. But there was furious shooting, shirtsleeve weather and the fishing afterwards.

You're right. I'm forgetting the mosquitoes, the gnats, the snakes, the alligators, the smaller limit. But there was also a marsh alive with mottled ducks, pintail and grays at their most gullible.

Watching blacks and pintail pour into your decoys made you half enchanted by this spectacle, half infuriated that it never happened this way during the regular season. They'd dance above the decoys almost taunting you, then drift off. A little chuckle on the call and they'd turn back, coasting on wings barely moving. Then they'd land. All eight of them. Eight pintail staring at the decoys with a quizzical look and preening 30 feet in front of you.

Then there was the fishing. September meant redfish in the marsh. Sometimes you saw them from the blind, finning through the shallows. Surging through the grass as they chased cocahoes, smashing the surface to a froth when they caught them.

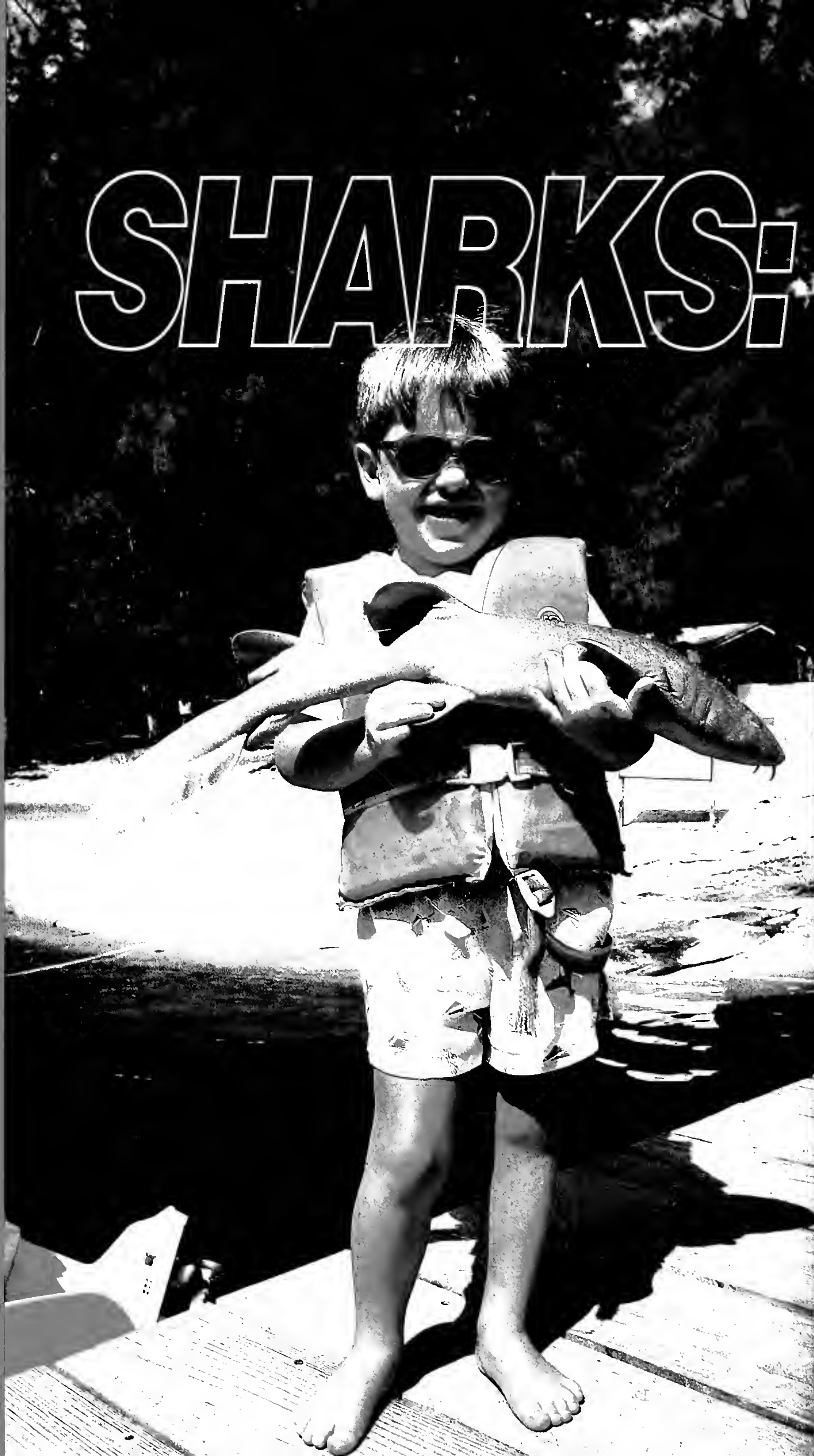
Blue-wing teal were hit hard by all the factors that clobbered ducks this decade. They nest in the areas hardest hit by the drought. Prior to this year, blue wing numbers were 35 percent below the 30 year average. But Robert Helm, waterfowl specialist with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, tells us that things are looking up.

"The Mississippi Flyway Council made a request to get the season back this year," he says. "Actually, blue wing teal numbers right now stand at about the same as they did when we started having teal seasons back in 1965. They're up 28 percent from last year, so I thought we had a pretty good case. But I guess we'll have to wait."

Well, there's always next year...and oh...about that redfish I had on the line when I got distracted. He turned into a sheepshead when I got him to the boat. But throughout that breezy morning my eyes kept scanning the marsh. And the teal kept the memories flowing. □

Though the blue-winged teal was hard hit by the drought on the breeding areas and other factors which caused the sweeping decline of waterfowl populations in the last few decades, things are looking up for a possible blue-winged teal season in the near future. Numbers, up 28 percent from last year, are equal to numbers in 1965 when teal seasons first opened.

SHARKS:



This proud young fisherman holds his shark as if he were holding a puppy. Even the youngest of the recreational fishermen get in on the action. Unfortunately, the youngest of the sharks get caught up in the action, too. This photograph was taken in September 1987. Today's standards for shark tournaments strongly discourage landing a shark this small.

Photo by Jose I. Castro

VICIOUS AND BRUTAL OR HELPLESS AND FRAGILE?

BY MARIANNE MARSH BURKE

Sharks have an incredible reputation. Their instinct for survival has kept them alive for many millions of years. Their vicious and brutal reputation comes from various reports of shark attacks on boats as well as humans. Myths and legends tell of sharks eating anything in their path.

But the shark has finally met its match--the ultimate predator--Man.

It's hard to believe that in a struggle between shark and man, man would win. But that is exactly what is happening in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico fishing industries. Overfishing, discarded bodies, dismembered body parts, and extensive waste are some of the problems threatening the shark's existence. An animal once thought of as vicious and brutal now is often referred to as helpless and fragile.

The threat to the shark's existence stems from its increasing popularity. In the past sharks were primarily a bycatch and utilized only for their livers and hides. The livers were used for the high concentration of vitamin A they contained and the hides were processed into leather. This was the extent of the shark industry. But in the late 1970s the shark's popularity increased. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) created an extensive campaign to promote sharks as an underutilized species and a potential source of income for the commercial industry. NMFS offered workshops, seminars and videos on the proper way to fish for and handle sharks. Shark meat became an alternative to other high cost fish offering a boneless, nutritional meat with a mild flavor. The consumer liked it and the demand grew.

As demand grew, so did fishing. Overfishing became the first issue in the plight of the shark. A shark's reproductive cycle is much different than most fish. Instead of laying millions of eggs each year like bony fish, sharks give live birth every second year to a small number of pups, ranging from two to 20. Generally, the number is in the single digits. At this low and fragile reproductive rate, the shark cannot withstand the pressure of heavy fishing. However, some marine experts claim that sharks will reproduce according to the amount of stress encountered. For example, some species which normally produce two or three pups, may produce up to six pups when under the pressure of heavy fishing. But this claim has not been proven. Maybe Mother Nature is a better manager than we give credit.

But the increase in fishing is not only for shark meat, but fins as well. Relaxed importing restrictions to China has created a significant increase in the demand for shark fins, the main ingredient for an Asian dish called sharkfin soup. The fins are dried repeatedly and then skinned for the spaghetti-like fibers call ceratotrichia. Shark fins became the equivalent of high market dollars and the practice of finning became more prevalent.

Finning refers to the removal of the fins from the shark and discarding the carcass back into the water. The practice originated when sharks were primarily a bycatch. By keeping only the fins, the fishermen could reserve their storage space for more valuable species. Therefore, when a shark was pulled up with the catch, the fins were removed, hung up to dry, and the carcass was discarded overboard. It's an age old practice that has grown in popularity.

Fortunately for the shark, finning is not

This longfin mako was caught in the North Atlantic by a Japanese tuna boat. The fishermen were able to salvage some of their gear, but were not allowed to keep the shark. According to federal regulations, Japanese tuna boats are prohibited from keeping any catch other than tuna. Sadly, the shark died and was returned to the water unutilized. (The carcasses in the foreground and background are tuna.)

Photo by Jose I. Castro

In the past, the number of sharks landed during a tournament could accumulate to an outrageous number. With little or no regard to the size or species, fishermen would bring in any shark they hooked. Sharks would literally be dumped into piles like this one at a September 1986 tournament, only to be discarded at the end of the tournament.

practiced by all fishermen. As a matter of fact, the majority of the commercial industry views finning as a brutal waste. Large commercial fishermen and seafood dealers agree the shark should be utilized entirely. There are some fishermen, however, who don't see it that way. Their attitude is, "the only good shark is a dead shark." To them it doesn't make a difference whether the fins are removed at sea or land. But what those fishermen don't understand is that sharks provide more marketable products than any other single group of fish. Aside from the obvious products like meat, fins and hides, there are other valuable parts of the shark. The shark can be processed into fish meal or fertilizer. The teeth can be used in jewelry and the jaws sold to the tourism industry. The Eastern cultures grind up the vertebrae for face powder for Geisha girls. The shark has even played a role in medical research. It has a natural immunity to cancer tumors which has intrigued the medical profession for years.

It is not just a matter of where the fins are removed. It's a matter of brutal treatment and ignorant wastefulness.

But there is an up side to this part of the shark's story. According to Karl Mapes, biologist for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, it was the commercial industry itself that began to police the practice of finning. Realizing the waste involved, the adverse public image and the probability of increasedregulations, shark dealers began to set certain standards with the fishermen. As a result there has been a decline in the number of finning cases reported.

It's not just the commercial industry causing havoc with the shark population. Recreational fishermen have contributed their share of waste to the shark fishery. In the early days of shark tournaments there was no consciousness in the treatment of sharks. Starting in the 1960s through as late as the 1980s, prizes were awarded for the total weight or number of sharks caught. There were even cases where prizes were given to the largest number of shark tails landed. Smaller sharks were routinely killed instead of released. Sometimes the jaws were removed and the rest of the carcass discarded. In all of the above cases, the catch was discarded. Again, the general attitude was "the only good shark is a dead shark". When "Jaws" appeared on the silver screen, the public envisioned all sharks as vicious and brutal killers. Any treatment to the shark was justifiable.

Over the years, the number of shark tournaments has greatly increased and, fortunately, respect for the shark has increased as well. Prior to 1983 there were approximately a half dozen tournaments throughout the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. By 1983 there were more than 40 shark tournaments and currently there are about 65 each year.

Individuals who conduct shark tournaments have become aware of the shark's story. Most tournaments have set restrictions on minimum size and the number of sharks per boat. They encourage tagging and releasing and discourage landing smaller sharks that

will be discarded. On some occasions, observers are allowed on the boats. Today most tournaments keep records of their operations and do not advocate the wasteful destruction of the animal.

But the plight of the shark has not gone unnoticed. Although NMFS was the initiating force behind promoting the shark, they are also the force behind saving it. Management forces have acknowledged the danger of overfishing and the wasteful practices of both commercial and recreational user groups. A Shark Fishery Management Plan has been developed by NMFS, the National Oceanic and Atmospherical Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce in hopes of restoring the shark population by the year 2000. It will incorporate features for both user groups and should be in force by early 1992.

The new Shark Fishery Management Plan focuses on the industries in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. It is a very detailed plan but the objectives are simple: to prevent overfishing of shark resources; to encourage management of shark stocks; to establish shark resource data collection, research and monitoring; and to increase the benefits from shark resources to the U.S. while reducing waste. These objectives will be accomplished by establishing fishing seasons, commercial and recreational quotas, prohibiting finning and requirements that all fins be landed attached to the carcass. In addition it will prohibit the sale of sharks or shark products by the recreational group and require individuals who conduct shark tournaments to keep records and provide information on their operations. Of course there is much more to the plan, but these features outline the basics.

There are still some individuals who feel the management plan is unnecessary. But after the reports on landings and waste percentages, it's hard to argue against the plan. Over the period between 1979-1988 U.S. shark landings averaged over 6,000 metric tons annually, while total yearly discards averaged approximately 16,000 metric tons. Between 1989 and 1990 the total U.S. shark landings increased threefold. The total U.S. shark landings for 1989 totaled 7,122 metric tons or approximately 15,668,400 pounds. The total U.S. shark landings for 1990 increased to just over 23,000 metric tons (50,772,000 pounds). In Louisiana, shark landings for 1989 and 1990 were reversed. The total in 1989 was 2,496 metric tons or 5,491,513 pounds. In 1990, Louisiana landings dropped to approximately 873 metric tons or 1,919,469 pounds. Although the exact extent of shark discards is difficult to pinpoint, NMFS reports that approximately 90 percent of the commercial catch and 50 percent of the recreational catch is discarded. With landings for the U.S. increasing, the logical assumption is that shark waste will increase as well.

The shark is suffering. Overfishing, lack of management, finning, bycatch mortality and waste, and limited public knowledge are the causes behind the plight of the shark. The responsibility of helping this animal survive falls in the hands of all groups, including the management forces and the public. The public needs to be aware of the uniqueness of this species and its important role to the economy as well as the ecosystem. A species that has endured for ages, once feared as a vicious and brutal animal, now appears to be helpless and fragile in the hands of man. □

With shark fins bringing high market dollars to the fishermen, finning became more prevalent throughout the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Rows of fins drying on commercial vessels were not an uncommon sight. This photograph was taken on a commercial fishing vessel as it was escorted to Delcambre, Louisiana, by LDWF Enforcement agents.

Photo by Capt. Keith LaCaze

Photo by Dave Moreland

The single most important concept in the phenomenal success of Louisiana's deer restoration project has now become the greatest obstacle to its continued success. "Don't shoot the does" was hammered into three generations of Louisiana hunters. It is tradition, and traditions die hard.

HUNTING DOES:

THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

BY JERRY FARRAR, DEER STUDY LEADER, AND MAURICE COCKERHAM

"We ain't shooting no does!"

That simple statement defines the greatest single obstacle to continuing progress in attempts by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to effectively manage deer populations throughout the state.

The department's Deer Management Assistance Plan (DMAP), an updated version of the original Intensive Deer Management Program, makes professional management advice available to private landowners and hunt-

ing clubs. Department biologists survey habitat and deer herds and work with DMAP cooperators to formulate plans to provide optimum deer populations for the property involved.

The cooperators, however, are required to follow the harvest guidelines necessary to correct and/or maintain the buck-to-doe ratio in the herds. That almost always calls for reducing the total number of does, and that's where the trouble usually starts.

"We ain't shooting no does!"

A significant number of individuals and hunting clubs have refused to enter or have withdrawn from DMAP over that single issue.

The staunch resistance to shooting does is understandable, particularly in the context of Louisiana's deer management efforts over the past half-century.

By the 1920s and 30s, a combination of expanding human population, intensive "clear-cut" logging, conversion of forest land to agricultural crops and constant, unregulated hunting had wreaked disaster on the state's deer herds. In many areas, seeing a deer's tracks was a topic of conversation. Actually seeing a deer could set a whole town abuzz. The few deer remaining in Louisiana were found only in remote swamps and other inaccessible areas.

Then, in 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act was signed by President Roosevelt. That legislation enacted a federal excise tax on hunting arms and ammunition and dedicated the funds thus collected to wildlife restoration and conservation projects throughout the nation.

It was indeed a propitious moment, although the Second World War would delay meaningful implementation of the projects.

In 1948 The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission inaugurated a statewide deer restocking program. The timing could not have been better. Second growth timber had reclaimed many previously "logged-out" areas and abandoned homesteads. With the second growth timber came lush understory growth providing optimum food and cover for deer.

Additionally, concerned sportsmen and other conservationists forced the enactment of meaningful game laws, including stringent seasons and bag limits and the creation of a meager force of game wardens.

Finally, returning G.I.s were available to supply abundant manpower to staff the ambitious deer restoration effort. Many of them, utilizing the G.I. Bill, earned degrees in Wildlife Biology and Wildlife Management.

Keep in mind that, at that point, less than 15 percent of the huntable land in Louisiana was open to deer hunting and the annual legal harvest totaled less than one thousand animals.

The re-stocking plan focused on trapping native deer from the few healthy herds in the state, located principally in the Tensas Basin, the Red Dirt and Catahoula Refuges in the Kisatchie National Forest, Marsh Island Refuge, Zemurray Refuge, and other areas. The trapped deer would be transported to pre-selected release sites to serve as "seed stock" for new deer herds.

In order for the new herds to survive, however, a massive re-education program had to be implemented. Public support was imperative. Central to the entire effort, particularly when the fledgling herds expanded enough to support initial hunting opportunities, was the caveat, "Don't shoot a doe!"

Sportsmen took the slogan to heart. The hunter who killed a doe was considered to be lower than pond scum by other sportsmen and the general public. More than one such nimrod had both his ego and his body bruised by an irate supporter of the deer re-stocking program.

It paid off. Although only 3,025 deer were actually trapped and re-located during the 21 years from 1948 until 1969, Louisiana now has thriving deer herds where no deer existed before. In fact, Louisiana has far more deer today than existed in the state when the white man first showed his shining face on the banks of the Mississippi River.

The annual legal harvest rose from a meager one thousand in the 1920s to 16,500 in 1960 and, today it hovers at some 160,000 animals. The statewide deer population has grown from about forty-five thousand animals in 1950 to more than six hundred thousand.

Unfortunately, the most important single concept in the phenomenal success of Louisiana's deer restoration project has now become the greatest obstacle to its continued success. "Don't shoot the does" was ham-

Photo by Dave Moreland

In Louisiana, habitat type is the major factor limiting total deer populations, with most of the state's habitat now at or slightly above its natural "carrying capacity."

A healthy doe will usually begin breeding in her second year and will usually give birth to two fawns each year. Triplets are not rare when browse is plentiful and nutritious. Half of all fawns will also be does.

Photo by Dave Moreland

mered into three generations of Louisiana sportsmen. It is tradition, and traditions die hard.

But die it must, and for a very simple reason. We now have little room for our deer herds to continue to expand. Professional wildlife managers use the term "carrying capacity." Quite simply, that means that a given piece of property can support only a given maximum number of animals (deer, in this case), and most of Louisiana's available deer habitat is now at or above its sustainable "carrying capacity."

Many sportsmen find the concept hard to accept. "We don't have nearly as many deer in the Kisatchie Forest as in the Tensas Basin," they argue. They are right. But the habitat limits the total deer population. The predominantly pine forests of the Kisatchie simply will not support the number of deer, per hundred acres, that can thrive in the mixed hardwood bottomlands of the Tensas. Each animal requires a given amount of space, cover, food and water. A verdant bottomland hardwood area may support one deer per 10 acres, whereas a sand hill pine forest may support only one deer per one hundred acres, or even less.

Accepting that biological fact is crucial to understanding the second aspect of the doe (antlerless deer) hunting problem. That is population dynamics.

Let's examine a hypothetical case where two thousand acres of bottomland hardwood swamp contains fifty deer and has a natural carrying capacity of three hundred deer. Let's assume that there are twenty five does and twenty five bucks in that herd.

A mature doe will give birth to two fawns a year. One will be a buck and one a doe. That's simply Mother Nature's Rule with deer.

Biologists have determined through exhaustive research that a normal, healthy herd in optimum habitat will increase its size by 30 percent or more per year. The losses are attributable primarily to the deaths of fawns and older animals due to aging, floods, droughts, accidents and minor predation. (Predators are not a significant factor. "Progress" has killed off the bears, the wolves and the big cats.)

Our example is a healthy, expanding herd capable of supporting limited hunting pressure. Seasons and bag limits are set to allow a harvest by hunters of antlered deer only. The entire antlered buck segment of a herd comprises only about 30 percent of the population. The remaining 70 percent is composed of does, fawns and yearlings of both sexes with no antlers. It takes really serious hunting

pressure to remove 15 percent of a herd—half of the antlered bucks—with bucks-only regulations.

Our hunters, in this case, are allowed to harvest only fifteen bucks. A single buck will easily service five to seven does during the breeding season, so reproduction will not be threatened. The twenty five does in the herd will produce twenty five male fawns, for a net gain of ten, and an additional twenty five female fawns.

Clearly, protection of the does insures continued rapid expansion of the total herd, including continued growth in the numbers of available bucks.

But, lo! Simple mathematics reveals that the total number of does in the herd soon far outweighs the total number of bucks. This is acceptable, sometimes even desirable, so long as the available habitat supports continued expansion. Inevitably, however, the total population will reach the "carrying capacity" of the habitat. At that point, a serious problem arises.

In our hypothetical case, we'll discard natural losses for simplicity's sake. The herd enters the second year with fifty does and thirty five bucks. The total bag is set for 28 animals (30 percent) and, once again, hunters take only antlered bucks.

In the third year, danger looms. We are looking at one hundred does and seventy bucks. Hunters take 57 bucks.

We now have a total deer herd which is equal to the carrying capacity of the available habitat, with two hundred does and one hundred and thirteen bucks. We also have twice as many does as bucks in the woods and, with continued bucks-only hunting, the ratio will soon be seriously skewed toward antlerless deer, most of which are does. This situation now exists in many of Louisiana's deer herds.

Professional wildlife managers know that, once a herd reaches the natural carrying capacity of its habitat, the optimum annual harvest figure should be at least equal to the annual herd growth rate, with an equal number of bucks and does included.

At this point, things begin to get serious. Over-population stresses the available food supply. Green briar, blackberry, honeysuckle and other food plants are no longer simply "browsed back." They are totally consumed. Botanists have long known that a consumption rate in excess of forty-five percent causes serious harm to food plants and, once damaged, browse will support fewer deer thereafter. Research also has shown that the lack of nutritious foods, combined with overcrowded conditions, sets the stage for parasite infestations and disease problems.

Many areas undeniably have large deer populations. Too often, however, hunters and others fail to really see those deer. The woods are crawling with deer all right, but the majority are does and the average buck is a yearling...maybe a second year animal... with skinny spikes or perhaps three or four points. And most are pitifully puny creatures with a dressed weight of seventy or eighty pounds for bucks and twenty pounds less for does being common.

This is a deer herd in decline, posing a threat both to itself and to its habitat. This is a deer herd in serious trouble.

And still we hear the cry, "We ain't shooting no does!" □

Unrestrained growth of the doe segment of a deer herd, and reduction of the buck segment through hunting, eventually creates an over-crowded and under-nourished deer herd with the potential to seriously damage the available habitat.

Photo by Dave Moreland

The mourning dove is considered by many to be the most prolific bird in the United States. It nests in 48 states as well as in southern Canada, Mexico and the West Indies. About 2.5 million dove hunters spend over $90 million a year in pursuit of what has been termed one of America's finest game birds.

autumn doves

A SOUTHERN TRADITION

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON W. PFITZER

Why does the mourning dove cause so much excitement in so many places among so many people? Maybe it's because the early September season heralds the beginning of a new hunting year. Perhaps it is one of the most challenging wing targets or maybe it's because the mourning dove is found almost everywhere. Whatever the reason, the dove is one of America's finest game birds.

In August, people who may never buy another round of ammunition until the next year crowd into sporting-goods sections of every store that has cases and cases of 20- and 12-gauge field loads on sale. The hunters come to buy shotgun shells and every kind of camouflage garment from T-shirts to plastic buckets with revolving seats, just to be ready for opening day

of dove season. There are about 2.5 million dove hunters who spend over $90 million a year in the U.S.

Established hunt clubs and less formal groups of hunters and individuals have been negotiating with landowners and farmers to plant a field of just the right stuff to attract doves. If there is doubt about the crops being ready, they begin to search their souls about the ethics of baiting the field with whatever it takes to attract or hold the birds. All this, just to be ready for the big blast on opening day.

On any good dove field across the southeast, opening day sounds like a military battle zone. Both the experienced and novice dove hunter may stand in amazement at the pile of empty shells at his feet and few or no birds in the bag. The small flocks and single birds sweep into the field. Camouflaged hunters begin firing with what seems to be aimless abandon. Shots ring out—10, 20, even 30 shots may be fired at one bird as it circles, darts and finally climbs rapidly out of the field, unscathed. Most hunters settle down and those in good spots kill a limit of birds, while others shoot three or four boxes of shells for only one or two doves. The average is about five or six birds per hunter per trip and about five trips per season.

What is it about doves that makes them so scarce after that first blast? The most obvious reason is that virtually all the doves killed on the first day are local doves. There will be no new recruitment until birds hatched in other areas move in. Can it be that we are treating them with the passenger-pigeon syndrome, as though they were an inexhaustible resource? I don't think so, nor do I want to leave the impression that the mourning dove is in danger or that I am advocating not hunting doves. If we shoot the heck out of doves on opening day, local birds are taking the brunt until migrants move in. This is true no matter where you are, but especially in the southern half of the country from the Atlantic to the Rockies.

In all the states of the southeast quarter of the country, more than 75 percent of the annual kill is during the first few days of the season.

It is not until October that migrant doves move into the Southern states. Band recoveries also indicate that this migration continues through December, depending on weather. This is why the state game and fish agencies set seasons the way they do. Many states now select split seasons, one during September, and one or two later in the season. This is based on the federal framework which provides for the states to select a given number of days, usually 70, from the outside date of September 1 to January 15. This makes it possible to harvest from the entire continental population of doves, including those states that do not permit dove hunting.

The total kill for the southeastern quarter of the U.S., including Texas and Oklahoma, is about 40 million birds. Over the years, the average annual total population of mourning doves is estimated to be 500 million, with an annual harvest of about 50 million birds. The mourning dove is considered by many to be the most prolific bird in the U.S.

The mourning dove is the only game bird that is designated a song bird in 14 states.

More mourning doves are killed by hunters in this country than all other game birds combined. The national mourning dove population has been monitored since 1953 by a call-count survey. This survey is a roadside count of doves seen and heard by cooperators over 900 randomly selected routes in 48 states. The numbers of doves heard at 20 different three-minute listening stations on each 20-mile route are checked once between May 20 and June 20 each year. Data collected are compared and grouped by region and state, and by Eastern, Central and Western management units.

The clearing of the Eastern forests and the mechanical harvesting equipment created ideal habitat for the mourning dove. Ironically, the same factors that produced such good habitat have been reversed in the South, with the land uses changing from small farms and scattered wood lots to extensive pine plantations and pasture. These conditions have probably reduced the total number of doves within

A mourning dove hatched very early in spring may breed and nest in the summer. Single pairs may renest as many as five times in one year.

some subpopulations. Many thousands of acres that were once farmland have been converted to residential suburban areas that provide nesting and some feeding habitat, but no hunting. Whether this has offset the losses in the rural areas is yet to be determined.

In the states west of the Mississippi numerous tree-lined streams, farm shelterbelts and homesteads with rows of trees for wind breaks produce ideal nesting areas for doves. As these trees were cleared to make way for cleaner, larger uninterrupted acreages this nesting habitat was lost. The adaptable dove will nest on the ground, but this will not replace the loss of tree nesting.

Except for the white spots on the tail and the black spots on the wings, the mourning dove is uniformly gray and remarkably pretty and graceful. The adult male has a light blue hue on the head and nape, while the adult female has a brownish tinge to the crown and nape. Both have red legs and feet and a black bill. Immature doves are smaller, lighter in color and are characterized by a white or buff-colored edging on the wing feathers. This soon disappears as the young birds molt and gain their adult plumage.

During the nesting season doves can become very gentle and tolerate a great amount of human activity. During the early September hunts they come into the fields in one, twos and threes or in small, loose flocks. They are less wary. As the season progresses, flocks become larger and the attitude changes to a much wilder, more elusive target. This makes winter dove hunting one of the most challenging types of wingshooting. A hogged-down or mechanically picked corn field is the ideal field. Most are large, mature birds, the ones we Southerners call "those big blue Northern doves" or "Yankee doves" in contrast to the smaller, young doves of early September.

The mourning dove is unique among all North American game birds. It is the only game bird that is designated a songbird in 14 states. It nests in 48 states, southern Canada, Mexico and the West Indies and winters as far south as Central America. In several Southern states, the mourning dove nests in every month of the year.

The dove nest is one of the flimsiest of all birds. Two or three eggs are laid and the young hatch in 11 to 14 days almost naked and totally helpless. Both parents brood the eggs and feed the squabs with a material called "pigeon milk," a whitish liquid secreted from the crop. The squabs are ready to leave the nest in 12 to 14 days. A dove hatched very early in spring may breed and nest in the summer. Single pairs may renest as many as five times in one year.

Anyone who has hunted a good dove field has seen the ultimate in skybusting. Although annoying to the gunner who prides himself in

clean kills and using the fewest number of shells to bag his birds, skybusting has a good side. Every shell fired means more money for game management by state game and fish agencies. The Pittman-Robertson Act, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program, referred to as the P-R Program, provides for an 11 percent excise tax on the sale of guns and ammunition. This 54-year-old program is the best example of "hunters paying their way" not only for game species but also for the many species of non-game wildlife. This money goes to the states for research and management of wildlife. So, as many wildlife biologists say when a volley of 15 to 20 shells is fired at one bird without turning a feather, "there goes another P-R bird!"

The mourning dove has been studied intensely, with hundreds of thousands of bands returned to give much information about migration patterns and harvest numbers.

There are several very good methods of planting crops that are not only legal but are also beneficial to other wildlife. A wide variety of crops can be used. Among the most useful are browntop millet, sunflower, wheat, corn and grain sorghums.

An excellent pamphlet, "Managing Agricultural Areas for Migratory Bird Hunting," is now available from the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It contains a section on dove field management that describes the do's and don'ts for planting crops and baiting regulations. The current baiting regulations for doves are about as liberal as they can be without permitting uncontrolled baiting. The pamphlet also contains an important section on the responsibility of the hunter.

A crippling-loss study has demonstrated that location of woods and type cover on hunted fields was significant in retrieving downed birds. Only 8 to 12 percent of the birds were lost when downed on bare ground or in harvested crops or mowed weed fields. The recovery loss was 28 percent for standing crops, but increased to 59 percent when the doves fell in forest cover. Anyone who has hunted doves has watched painfully as a well-hit bird glided out of the field into a wooded area, never to be seen again, or one that fell, cleanly killed, into the woods and was not found after long and careful search. This deserves careful consideration when planning the location of a dove field.

More and more hunters in Louisiana are abiding by hunting laws because it is the thing to do. Baiting is no longer socially acceptable. Judges are recognizing migratory bird violations as serious infractions and are giving substantial fines and other penalties for those convicted. Hopefully there will be more people willing to forget their old ways of baiting and killing as many doves as they can. The mourning dove affords the hunters an excellent opportunity to socialize. Right now there are enough doves to go around for ethical hunting, but not for wanton killing and unbridled baiting. □

Dove populations have been monitored since 1953, with an average annual population total of about 500 million! In comparison, the average annual harvest, nationally, is about 50 million birds.

Pearl River

A WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA PROFILE

By Dave Moreland & Maurice Cockerham

In December of 1971 Governor John J. McKeithen, accompanied by members of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, signed an Act of Sale for 15,594 acres of "swampland" in St. Tammany Parish.

This was part of the fabled "Honey Island Swamp." Dark and foreboding to the uninitiated, it had long been a mecca for sportsmen willing to penetrate its depths and learn its secrets.

Deer were abundant and turkeys roamed the forests. In fall and winter, waterfowl flocked to the flooded swamps and coastal marshes. There were squirrels and rabbits. The rivers, bayous and creeks were filled with catfish, bass, bream and crappie. Specks and reds could be taken on the lower end. There were alligators and a thriving population of feral hogs with a reputation for ferocity that persists to this day.

Located hard against the Louisiana-Mississippi boundary, the tract encompassed riverbottom hardwoods in the north, cypress-tupelo swamps farther south and a significant swath of brackish coastal marsh on the southern extremity near Highway 190. Numerous waterways meandered throughout the length and breadth of the area and quiet, secluded lakes dotted the heartland.

In retrospect, it was a fantastic bargain. The original tract passed to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for the total sum of $1,286,555,33...just $82.50 per acre! (Less than a decade later, the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area in the Atchafalaya Basin was to cost Louisiana $1,000 per acre.)

The deal was made even sweeter by an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation under which a full one-half of the purchase price was refunded to the state by the Department of the Interior through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Simply on the basis of dollars and cents, the purchase of the original Pearl River WMA ranks as one of the best buys the department has ever made, but there is far more to the story than money.

In the first place, riverbottom hardwoods and cypress-tupelo swamps constitute a disappearing habitat type throughout North America. The purchase represented a significant success in the effort to preserve a remnant of a forest which once covered the entire heartland of the United States.

Secondly, by 1971 the continent's duck populations were in serious trouble, a situ-

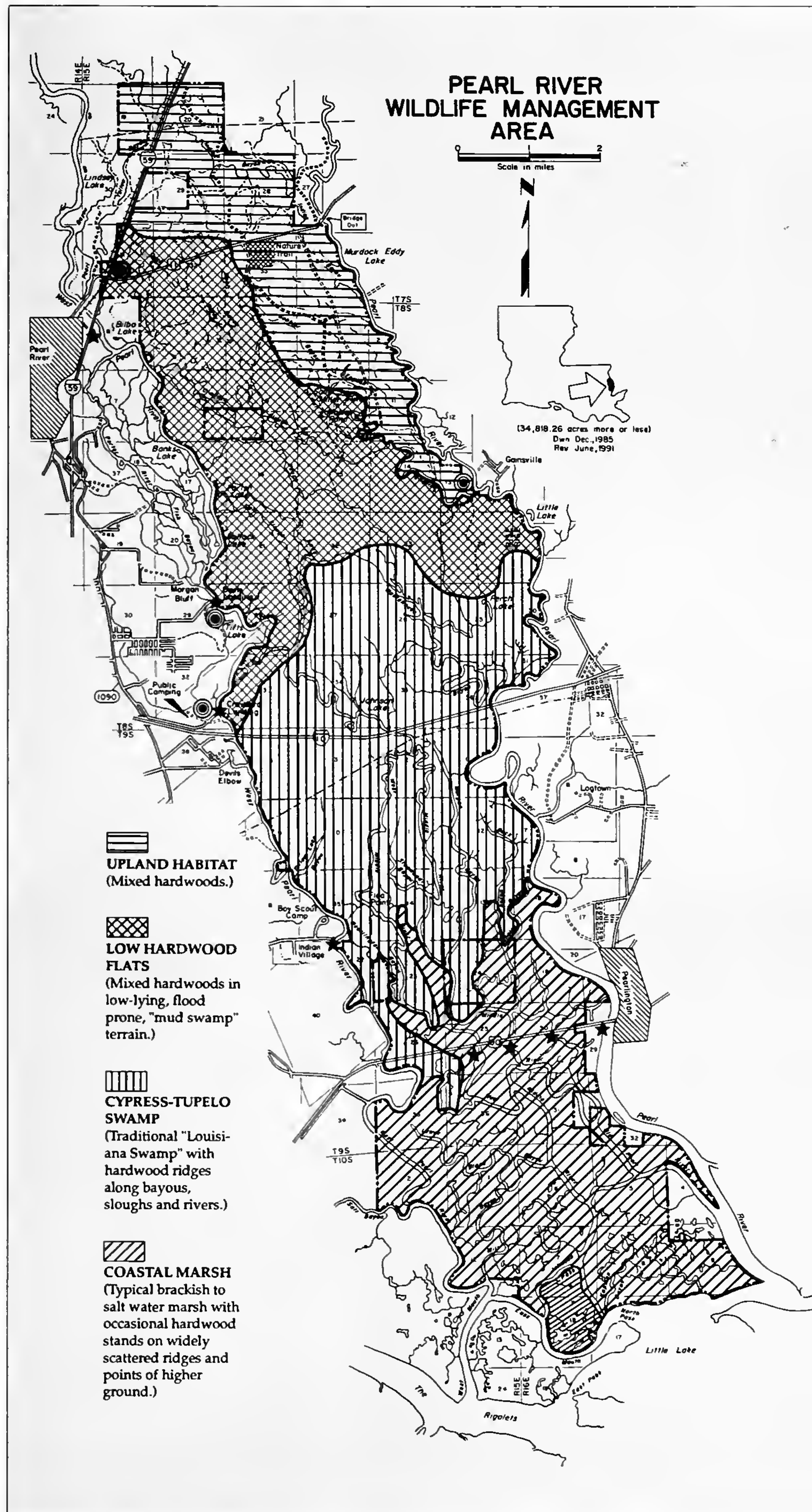


Photo by Dave Moreland

The natural beauty of Pearl River Wildlife Management Area draws visitors back time and again. Each visit produces new and fascinating discoveries. One of the authors have even taken refuge from a heavy winter rain beneath the roots of this gnarled oak.

ation which would later lead to the formulation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. (See "UPDATE: NAWMP"- January/February 1991 La. Conservationist.) Pearl River was a haven for waterfowl, from the resident populations of Wood ducks and Mottled Ducks to the flocks of migratory birds that swarmed the area each winter.

Furthermore, the purchase enabled the department to provide a prime outdoor recreation facility easily accessible to a densely populated urban area.

Pearl River Wildlife Management Area is located just north and east of Slidell and within an hour's ride of New Orleans. It is an outdoor paradise located on the doorstep of urbanity, yet its primitive ruggedness discourages the "over use" and abuse which might be expected in such proximity to a major metropolitan area.

Nor did the efforts cease with the original establishment of Pearl River WMA. In 1973, an additional 9,951 acres were purchased extending the northern boundary of the management area to include even more of the precious riverbottom hardwoods.

In 1984 and 1985, other purchases expanded the southern boundary all the way to the mouth of the Pearl River at Lake Borgne.

Two decades following the original purchase, Pearl River WMA has more than doubled in size. It now sprawls across 34,896 acres, preserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment and education of generations.

Let's take a quick tour of Pearl River WMA and see what is available for Louisianians and visitors.

At the management area headquarters, located on the West Pearl River at Crawford Landing, (see map) there is a primitive camping area open to the public. Restrooms and potable water are available. No camping is allowed elsewhere within the management area.

Just off old U.S. Highway Eleven, an abandoned roadway across the northern portion of the area, a shooting range is available from 7:00 a.m. until dark each day. The range is closed to the public only when the annual Managed Hunt for deer is underway or when the facility is being used for the department's Hunter Education courses.

Also off Old Highway Eleven is the Honey Island Nature Trail. The self-guided circular route is well marked and heavily used by schools and organized nature study groups as well as individuals. Studies in biology and zoology, bird watching and nature photography...or just relaxing for a few hours surrounded by nature rather than computers,

Two decades following the original purchase, Pearl River WMA has more than doubled in size. In now sprawls across 34,896 acres, preserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment and education of generations.

people and automobiles...are readily available.

For those who wish to stray from the beaten path a compass and map, and the ability to use both, are strongly recommended, together with a little advance planning and common sense. (See "Practical Survival for Louisiana Outdoorsmen," Jan./Feb. 1987 La. Conservationist.)

There are thousands of acres of mixed hardwoods, teeming with wildlife of many species. Flora includes everything from cow oak and overcup oak to sweetleaf and sassafras to huckleberry and blueberry.

In the middle and southern portions, access is quite limited except by boat, but launching small craft such as canoes and pirogues is no problem whatsoever.

Those with trailered boats will find launch ramps at Crawford Landing, Davis Landing and a number of public and private landings. Among the best is a multi-ramp public launch at the East Pearl River on U.S. 90.

Both organized groups and individuals enjoy countless miles of winding waterways of every description. Motorboats ply the rivers and larger bayous with a minimum of traffic.

For the angler, Pearl River WMA is a virtual wonderland. Bass pros and fly rodders greet each other, being careful not to unduly disturb the sun tanned youngster "perch jerking" among the cypress knees and stumps or the old-timer in the wooden bateau taking channel catfish off of a trotline.

Farther south, anglers take school specks and runt reds with regularity. Quite often, larger surprises lurk beneath the cloudy,brackish waters.

It is during hunting season that Pearl River's personality really changes. They come from Slidell and New Orleans and surrounding communities, from southern Mississippi and from across Louisiana. Most are deer hunters and duck hunters, but squirrel hunters abound and even the still healthy, though officially unwelcome, population of feral hogs has a dedicated group of fans.

It is a unique and wondrous place...a true "pearl" of natural beauty and, more importantly, of natural heritage. □

Photo by Dave Moreland

Sportsmen visiting Pearl River Wildlife Management Area during the fall and winter hunting seasons find a bountiful diversity of game. "Mixed bags" containing several species, including fish, are a common occurence.

In a decade known for hardball politics, bathtub gin and flagpole sitters, Louisiana was blessed with a woman of rare vision and commitment to conservation. Lucy Powell Russell left us a legacy now known as the Louisiana Conservationist. Opposite, her only daughter Helen Dietrich displays a picture of her mother.

Vision, Politics and Tradition–

ONE WOMAN'S CAREER

BY CARLA FAULKNER

In an era when Huey Long "rolled over everyone like a steamroller," Lucy Powell Russell stood toe to toe with the Kingfish and out-maneuvered him in a battle of wits.

The story is told with animation by Russell's daughter Helen Dietrich. A sharp sophisticated New Orleans entrepreneur in her late 70s, Helen is an interesting story in her own right. She has enjoyed eight careers in her lifetime, five of which were her own businesses. The most recent, Habersham, is a publishing house for Louisiana literature.

On this occasion, however, we had met to discuss her mother's colorful career as Secretary of the Department of Conservation in the 1920s. Although Lucy Russell died in 1979, her life and career remain an important part of the history of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Seated in her elegant New Orleans condominium, Helen's silver hair caught the afternoon sunlight as she talked about the unique upbringing her mother's vocation provided her as a plucky young girl.

The sparkle in Helen's eyes, however, was not a property of the sunlight but ascended from the halls of her memory as she spoke.

"My mother led a different life from the mothers of the other children I knew, but it never bothered me. She was very feminine and never took on any masculine attitudes to go with her power."

By all accounts, Russell was a woman of enormous intelligence and fortitude. She went to work for the Department of Conservation, the forerunner of today's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, as secretary to the commissioner in 1917.

A shooting star, Russell enthusiastically involved herself in conservation activities nationwide. Commissioner V.K. Irion, the third commissioner she had assisted, recognized her leadership abilities and her complete understanding of conservation issues, and appointed her secretary of the entire department.

"I remember so much," said Helen. "I was 5 years old when my mother went to work for the Department of Conservation. I sometimes went to work with her down at the old courthouse at 400 Royal Street."

She smiled. "I knew everyone in the department—I was a gregarious child but everyone was nice to me."

As department secretary, Russell acted as liaison between the department and the public, supervised all financial affairs and exercised general supervision over all employees. She attended national conservation conferences where she conferred with commissioners of government and conservation bureaus, fish and game experts, foresters and geologists.

In a time when few women held positions of political importance or national recognition in traditionally male avenues, these accomplishments were quite remarkable. But among Russell's many hats was one of special

distinction--that of creator and editor of the department's first official magazine.

Known as the *Conservation News*, it was a source of great pride for Russell. How could she have known that 68 years later a descendant of the *News* would live on as an institution of the cause and the state she loved? The *Louisiana Conservationist* follows much the same ideals set forth by Russell almost seven decades ago.

The first issue of the *Conservation News* was published in January 1923. Russell defined its mission to "carry the story of what the Department of Conservation is doing to conserve and replenish nature's bountiful gifts to the Pelican State of bird life, fisheries, forests and minerals."

But, perhaps more importantly, she wrote that she hoped the *News* would bring about better interdivisional relationships. The divisions at that time were enforcement, fisheries, oysters, forestry, wildlife and minerals.

"The six divisions necessarily function as separate units of the department's work. But closer understanding and better cooperation exist when each division is acquainted with the problems and accomplishments of every other division," wrote Russell.

Lucy Powell was born into an influential West Feliciana Parish family in 1886 about three miles from St. Francisville. Her father, an affluent plantation owner, moved his wife and five children to New Orleans in 1891 where the children were sent to New Orleans' finest schools.

After her primary education, Lucy was sent to Normal School for school teachers. But she had other interests in her life, and school teaching wasn't among them.

Helen, the only child of Lucy Powell and William Crawford Russell, tells how her mother's wholehearted interest in her job sometimes led to adventurous excursions.

"My mother would go on research trips, sometimes for a week or more at a time. I would get excused from school to go along. Some of the biologists on those trips knew every snake and every creature in the state. It was an education just to tag along with them."

One particular expedition ended in near tragedy. Though Helen did not go on that trip, she remembers the details.

"My mother was out on a remote river on one of the research trips when the department boat they were in exploded. We waited at home all night, and she finally arrived in the dawn of the next morning wearing a hunter's clothes. A hunter had come along and rescued them from the river and brought them back to New Orleans."

A Times-Picayune article featuring Russell in 1929 lends some insight into her character. "Coupled with her splendid ability as a business woman," wrote the reporter, "Mrs. Russell has a winning personality. In the office, she is popular and exerts much influence over her fellow workers, the men of the department deferring to her in many things."

She also was active outside the office. She served as president of the New Orleans Business and Professional Women's Club and was invited to be an associate editor of "Wilds and Waters," a magazine published in Oklahoma City which dealt with the game and fish resources of the southern states.

But, as Helen tells the story, one man came to power who didn't seek Russell's expertise.

"It all ended in 1930—dramatically," she says. "Huey Long was elected governor and he wanted to appoint a friend, Robert Maestri, to Commissioner of Conservation. Long rolled over everyone like a steamroller without bothering to dot the I's and cross the T's."

According to Helen, Long failed to get the Senate's approval to oust Irion and his administration, so Irion didn't step down. Finally, Long was forced to go through the appropriate channels.

Of course, Irion and Russell knew it was only a matter of time before their jobs were terminated and their plans were made accordingly. When Long got the Senate's approval, he is reported to have bragged at the Roosevelt Hotel that he was going down to the Department of Conservation to fire "the smartest woman in Louisiana."

Helen's tenacity peeked through her polished exterior as she delivered the clincher. "But my mother didn't give Huey Long the satisfaction of firing her. When he walked in, she cooly tended her resignation papers."

It's not hard to figure out how Helen comes by her spunk. Honestly. □

A lady of extraordinary vision, Russell wrote in the inaugural issue that her hope in starting the Conservation News was to create a medium for reaching native Louisianans, other state departments and commissions and federal organizations that were concerned with the utilization and preservation of the nation's natural resources.

A typical issue of the early magazine features a limit catch of 40 white bass, much as today's magazine would feature a fishing or hunting cover, except in color.

NATIONAL HUNTING & FISHING DAY
20th Anniversary Sept. 28, 1991

Louisiana National Hunting & Fishing Day
Statewide Outdoor Celebration!

Louisiana's National Hunting and Fishing Day has been recognized for its educational and enjoyment values. The importance of the day is underscored by the fact that it is officially recognized by the governor. President Bush endorses it by serving as honorary chairman.

Food, Folks and Fun! Have you heard that before? It might be a coined phrase, but if you attended the Louisiana National Hunting and Fishing Day last year you probably remember some interesting food, lots of folks and a whole lot of fun!

The National Hunting and Fishing Day celebration this year has been scheduled for September 28. If you've never been, don't miss out this year!

National Hunting and Fishing Day is celebrating its 2Oth anniversary. It's an opportunity for the entire family to learn about Louisiana's hunting, fishing and wildlife directly from professional law enforcement officers, biologists and Wildlife and Fisheries administrative personnel.

The department is continuing its mission of public awareness by joining the National Shooting Sports Foundation in commemorating the Seventh Annual Award Winning Louisiana Hunting and Fishing Day. In 1989, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries was one of three states honored by the

The kids' fishing contest is annually a very popular event at the Baton Rouge location of the Hunting and Fishing Day festivities.

National Shooting Sports Foundation for "outstanding efforts, past and present, and increasing public awareness of National Hunting and Fishing Day in Louisiana."

Louisiana's theme for 1991 will focus heavily on uniting both the sportsman and the commercial user in a joint venture to educate the public in a positive manner.

The importance of the event is underscored by the fact that Gov. Buddy Roemer officially proclaims it, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission heartily endorses it and President Bush himself is serving as honorary chairman.

Bush, an enthusiastic quail hunter and fisherman, has stated:

"During the past half-century, sportsmen have contributed over $12 billion to conservation programs through license fees and self-imposed excise taxes—and currently provide $3 milion a day.

"I am proud to join with 60 million fellow sportsmen to celebrate National Hunting and Fishing Day, and I salute all sportsmen who support efforts to preserve and protect our natural resources."

Meantime, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, with the cooperation of other state agencies and private organizations, has scheduled a series of "field days" to commemorate the event.

A. Kell McInnis III, acting secretary of the department, stressed that as in previous years, hundreds of LDWF employees will be volunteering their own time and efforts to make the observance a success.

Fun-filled activities for lovers of the outdoors are planned in several areas, and heavy emphasis will be placed on hands-on activities for children.

Among the sites is the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge in Madison Parish. Hands-on activities include shotgun shooting, bait casting, muzzleloader and BB rifle shooting, and orienteering.

Demonstrations at Tensas River include cannon net, archery, black bear project, fish identification, reforestration, and turkey, duck and owl calling. Refreshments will be on sale at the Visitors Center. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information, call Mike Esters, 318/574-2664.

Another location will be LDWF's District II office on Highway 165 North at Monroe. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contests include bait casting, fishing, duck calling, archery and BB shooting. There will be a Franklin Parish catfish tasting booth plus commercial exhibits.

Demonstrations at District II include sporting clays, hunting retrievers, muzzleloading, duck calling, goose calling and deer grunting. Door prizes will be offered. Call Bill Breed for more information, 318/343-4044.

The annual Baton Rouge outing will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the City Police Youth Camp on Flannery Road between Florida and Greenwell Springs Road. Besides a multitude of exhibits, there will be demonstrations of archery, jig fishing, retrievers, firing of cannon net and more.

Participation activities include BB, skeet and muzzleloader shooting, archery, canoeing, boating education and a fishing contest for children. Free cold drinks and wildlife cooking samples will be provided. Licenses, boat registration and the *Louisiana Conservationist* magazine will be for sale. You may bring a picnic lunch but no pets or alcohol. Call 504/765-2866.

In the Shreveport-Bossier City area, LDWF programs will be combined with those of the Bossier Mid-South Game Fair '91. The event will run Sept. 27-29, and will be held at the Cypress Black Bayou Recreation Area seven miles north of Bossier City. Hours will be noon-6 p.m. Sept. 27 and 9 a.m-6 p.m. Sept. 28 and 29. There will be an admission charge, but children under 12 will be admitted free. A young people's biathlon will be among the featured presentations. Call 318/227-1515.

So come and spend the day with your family and enjoy the best of Louisiana's outdoors. Food, Folks and Fun! That's what Louisiana National Hunting and Fishing Day is all about. □

Participation activities make Louisiana National Hunting and Fishing Day activities educational and memorable. Below, a trained instructor shows a prospective archer how to shoot an arrow at a target.

Photo by Dave Moreland

The Bachman's fox squirrel is readily recognized by the patch of white on its nose. The white hair also is sometimes seen on the ears, toes and the tip of the tail. It can be found east of the Mississippi River in the pine and hardwood forest areas north of lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain.

BACHMAN'S Fox Squirrel

BY DAVE MORELAND

Every year an important event takes place the first Saturday in October. For Louisiana hunters that first Saturday in October means the opening day of the squirrel season. Squirrel hunting is by far the most important type of small game hunting we have (refer to Nov./Dec. 1989 issue of the *Louisiana Conservationist*).

Squirrels are rodents and belong to the order *Rodentia* which is the largest order of mammals. Rodents are gnawing animals and all members have paired inci-

sors in their upper and lower jaws that are used for cutting hard items.

For most persons the term "rodent" would conjure up thoughts of rats and mice, animals which are not usually given much respect. From a wildlife perspective, however, rats and mice are an important link in the food chain of many other species. The largest rodent in North America, the beaver, was an important fur animal and was one reason for the settlement of this country. The muskrat and nutria were two economically important fur species in Louisiana. Squirrels are important from a recreational standpoint to hunters who spend time and money in pursuit of the bushy tails.

There are three genera of squirrels in Louisiana. Fox and gray squirrels belong to the genus *Sciurus*, our little Eastern chipmunk is in the genus *Tamias*, and the Southern flying squirrel belongs to the genus *Glaucomys*. Our focus in this article is the species of fox squirrel that goes by *Sciurus niger bachmani* in the scientific world. For information on its cousins see the Sept./Oct. 1988 issue of the *Louisiana Conservationist*.

The Bachman's fox squirrel is found east of the Mississippi River in the pine and hardwood forest areas north of Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain. This region is commonly known as the "Florida Parishes."

Sometimes referred to as the "white-nosed" fox squirrel, the Bachman's fox squirrel is a large reddish squirrel that is readily recognized by the patch of white on its nose. The white hair sometimes occurs on the ears, toes, and the tip of the tail. Black or melanistic individuals are reported to occur. In 15 years of working in the Florida Parishes, however, I have never seen a solid black one with the white features. Most I have seen have scattered black markings on the upper or underparts of their body. A real trophy *Bachmani* will have the white on the nose, ears, toes and tail.

The habits, foods, and breeding biology of the Bachman's fox squirrel is the same as that of the other species of fox squirrels. Fox squirrels generally prefer an open type habitat in the forests. This is especially true for the white-nosed subspecies which can frequently be seen hopping along the ground at the edge of a field.

Dr. George Lowery, in his book "The Mammals of Louisiana and Its Adjacent Waters," states that the Bachman's fox squirrel intergrades with the subspecies *Sciurus niger subauratus* which occurs in the bottomlands along the Mississippi River in West Feliciana and East Baton Rouge parishes.

Fox squirrels are generally not early risers like the gray squirrels. Gray squirrels are up and about at dawn but fox squirrels usually wait until after sunrise to begin their foraging. When one encounters a gray squirrel in the woods the squirrel will usually try to escape by racing through the branches in search of a hiding place. Any hunter who decides to give chase has entered a race he is likely to lose. Fox squirrels, on the other hand, tend to slide around the branch of a tree, flatten out on the branch, and wait for the hunter to leave. The patient hunter will eventually be rewarded for his efforts.

Squirrels have always been abundant in Louisiana. Dr. Lyle St. Amant in his book "Louisiana Wildlife Inventory" reported high squirrel populations and a harvest of 15 squirrels per hunter per season was a conservative estimate. The clearing of many hardwood forests for agricultural purposes in the seventies reduced much of the available squirrel habitat.

New programs have now been initiated to replace cleared land and idle pastures with trees. Along with this, timber management practices that favor mast and den trees will benefit future squirrel populations and provide recreation for future generations of squirrel hunters. □

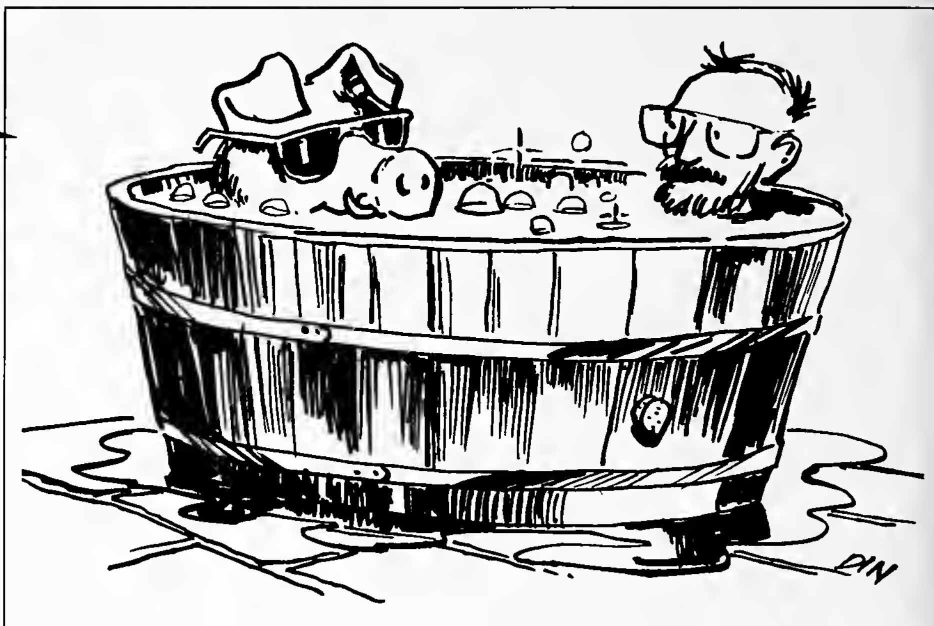
Unlike the gray squirrel which will usually try to escape by racing through the branches, a fox squirrel (below) will slide around and flatten out on the branch, waiting for the hunter to leave. The patient hunter will eventually be rewarded for his efforts.

Fun and Games on Bath House Row

FUNNY SIDE UP

BY GLYNN HARRIS

Artwork by David Norwood



I love Louisiana. Thus, I deserve a lashing with an old trotline--hooks removed, of course--for giving in to the urge last summer to spend a mini-vacation way up there in the far north country. Arkansas, to be specific.

Oh, there are some nice things about Arkansas. I especially like to poke around in the caverns, taking the opportunity to swagger up and expound to totally disinterested bystanders, my expert knowledge of the interesting mineral formations found in those caves.

"See that interesting formation sticking up right there? That there's your stalactite. Now, that one hanging down from the ceiling is your basic stalagmite," I sniffed confidently.

The tour guide, obviously poorly equipped for her job and sporting an ill temper to boot, brushed me aside and made what I considered to be an incredibly absurd statement.

"The formation 'he'," she snorted, thrusting a dagger of a finger toward me, "has incorrectly identified is neither stalactite nor stalagmite. It just happens to be a rather large pile of bat guano."

Okay, so I might be a bit weak in the "caves and caverns" category. After all, the deepest cave we have here in Louisiana is the one just outside Shongaloo created when an old moonshiner once tried to get a fire going under his still with a gallon jug of gasoline and a blow torch. To this day, it's known as Dumbutt Cave.

I know my outdoor stuff, though. During my years as an outdoor writer, covering the beat for my faithful readers, I have waded through the muck and mire of Yucky-poo swamp, nimbly sidestepping cottonmouths while shins ricocheted off cypress knees; had deer stands give way leaving me flailing the air; and gotten lost in a thicket so dense that if Kay hadn't stuck her head out the back door to call me in to supper, I might still be lost.

But no outdoor adventure ever quite prepared me for my visit to a Hot Springs bath house last summer.

Ever visited one of those torture chambers? Here's what you can expect when you enter the dark, dank maw of a bath house.

The first command is...take off all your clothes. Glancing nervously around at a room full of naked guys, all total strangers, I had a flashback of the time I took my Army physical and I found myself hoping fervently that this time, nobody would tell me to cough.

Before total and complete paranoia set in, however, a white-clad attendant came and led me away to a bubbling, steaming tub of water, ordering me to climb in.

The attendant called it "thermal" water, but you could have fooled me. With all the steam and bubbles, it appeared for the world like the water my granddad used for scalding hogs.

Then just before the first layer of my skin began slipping, I was escorted from the bath and locked in a steam chamber approximately the size of your average Rubik's cube. I amused myself watching through the steam the attendants taking bets to see how long it would take for claustrophobia to set in and I'd start screeching and careening off the walls. I forget who won.

At long last, I was released from the chamber and led to a table where I was tightly wrapped in sheets from the neck down and laid out alongside a bunch of similarly swaddled guys. In an attempt to display a bit of Louisiana cordiality, I turned to the fellow lying next to me, introduced myself and asked him where he was from. He blurted out a wild-eyed "Mmmmmmmggppffffff." He had just gotten out of Rubik's cubicle, I gathered.

Following a refreshingly cool needle shower that served to stitch my outer layer of skin back on, I was led to the massage table.

Being a somewhat naive country boy, I don't often get to use a big fancy word, but when a rare opportunity comes along, I seize that sucker.

As the elderly, dignified gentleman responsible for my massage (he reminded me, incidentally, of Hobson in the movie "Arthur") spiritedly pummeled and kneaded my cellulite, rearranging it into an interesting configuration, roughly resembling the craggy foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, I assumed my most nonchalant demeanor (assuming, of course, one can assume a nonchalant demeanor when one's shoulder is being systematically wrenched out of joint), and asked, "How long have you been a... (here comes the big word!)... masseuse?"

He stopped in mid-wrench and curtly implied that I had just asked an incredibly stupid question.

"I'm not a masseuse," he spat at me. "A masseuse is a female who gives massage. I'm a masseur," he sniffed, whipping a hammer-lock on me.

This year, we're definitely vacationing in Louisiana. It's been a long time since I visited that cave at Shongaloo.... □

LAW LINES

Behind the Badge

BY CAPT. KEITH LACAZE

Artist Donna Ewing (left) and husband Jimmy look on as Gov. Buddy Roemer signs a limited edition waterfowl print being sold to raise funds for the La. Wildlife Agents Association for projects for underprivileged children. To the right of Gov. Roemer are wildlife agents Donald Vallet and Eric Stokes.

By the time this issue of the *Louisiana Conservationist* reaches you, many new laws and changes in current regulations generated by the 1991 Session of the Louisiana Legislature will be in effect. Those regulations which affect the hunting, fishing and boating public are enforced by the agents of the LDWF Enforcement Division.

Space does not allow us to discuss all the new legislation. We can, however, look at four new laws that apply to resource users throughout the state. These laws will improve public safety, provide better protection for our wildlife, increase the penalties for violators and benefit Louisiana citizens in the armed forces.

The first of these new laws is House Bill No. 433 by Rep. Quentin Dastugue, D-Metairie. Known as the Personal Watercraft Safety Act, this bill imposes new regulations on the operation of watercraft commonly known as jet skis or wet bikes. These regulations include the following stipulations. Each person aboard must wear a Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device (life vest) approved by the U.S. Coast Guard. If the watercraft is equipped with a lanyard type engine cutoff switch, the operator must attach the lanyard to his clothing or personal flotation device. Personal watercraft shall not be operated between the hours of one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, and must at all times be operated in a "reasonable and prudent" manner.

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, no person under the age of 13 shall operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state. It is also unlawful for the owner or any person having charge of a personal watercraft to allow a person under the age of 13 to operate the watercraft. Finally, liveries shall not rent or lease personal watercraft to anyone under the age of 13. The bill became law on Sept. 6, 1991.

House Bill No. 1541 by Rep. Chris John, D-Crowley, places a restriction on the sights with which archery equipment may be equipped. The bill adds to existing law an additional provision which states that "no person shall take or kill any wild game quadruped or wild game bird with a bow or crossbow or other archery equipment, which is equipped with an infra-red or laser sight or any sighting device which projects a beam of light to the target or otherwise electronically illuminates the target." This law insures that bow hunting remains a sporting hunting method and is in effect for the 1991-92 hunting season.

The next bill we should discuss concerns changes in legislation enacted in 1990 on Class One violations. Class One violations are offenses such as hunting or fishing without a license.

The 1990 legislation stipulated that persons who commit a Class One violation are assessed a Civil Penalty in the amount of $50 for a first offense and higher amounts for subsequent offenses. This revenue is deposited in the Conservation Fund of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and is used for hiring and equipping additional enforcement agents.

House Bill No. 1573 by Rep. Robert Adley, D-Bossier City, helps assure these fines are paid. Effective Sept. 6 of this year, "failure to pay penalties and costs assessed under this Section shall result in the immediate revocation of all recreational hunting and fishing licenses held by the offender upon notification by registered letter with return receipt." The law further states that the revocation shall continue and no new licenses shall be issued as long as the penalty remains unpaid. Any person who purchases or obtains a hunting or fishing license of any type while under revocation will be charged with a criminal offense.

The last bill for our review is Senate Bill No. 108 by Sen. Gerry Hinton, R-Slidell. This legislation became law on July 16, 1991. It provides that Louisiana citizens serving in the armed forces of the United States and assigned to an active duty post outside the state are not required to obtain a license or pay a fee to fish or hunt while visiting Louisiana. This applies to hunting, fishing and recreational gear licenses. The person must, however, have in his possession, "proper written evidence that his absence from active duty assignment is authorized." The exemption does not apply to the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp.

This concludes our look at some of the new Wildlife and Fisheries Laws for 1991. For more information about hunting and fishing regulations, contact your local regional office of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Dates for the upcoming hunting season and other information can be found in the pamphlet titled "Louisiana Hunting Regulations 1991-92," available wherever hunting or fishing licenses are sold.

When you go afield, remember to obey the regulations and practice gun safety at all times. □

Conservation Notes

Index Available

The Louisiana Library Association has published an index to articles appearing in the *Louisiana Conservationist* and its predecessors from 1930 to 1988. Compiled by Rowena Hill of the Center for Wetlands Resources and prepared by LSU librarian Susan Hocker, the volume consists of both author and keyword indexes for the convenience of users.

The 197-page index sells for $5 (plus $1.50 postage and handling) and is available through the Louisiana Library Association, P.O. Box 3058, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

Duck Stamp Contest Opens

The fourth annual artists' competition for design of the state's Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp has been announced by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Better known as the State Duck Stamp, the 1992 edition will feature the pintail.

All artists who are 18 years of age or older and are domiciled in or natives of Louisiana are eligible to take part.

Entries must be received by 4 p.m. October 30, 1991, at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808. Judging will take place November 6.

For a copy of the rules or other information, write to Dave Morrison, c/o Game Division, at the above address or phone 504/765-2347.

Thanks to Timber Companies

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries expresses its appreciation to timber companies for permitting the state to continue using company lands for wildlife management.

Recently, a five-year free-lease agreement was signed with Boise Cascade covering 93,000 acres of timberlands in west central Louisiana. This agreement includes land within Boise-Vernon Wildlife Management Area in Vernon Parish, portions of Sabine WMA in Sabine Parish, and portions of West Bay WMA in Allen Parish.

The department also signed a three-year free-lease agreement with Louisiana Pacific - Kirby Division for 20,000 acres within West Bay WMA. Similar agreements are currently in effect with International Paper Co. and Quatre Parish Lumber Co. for properties within these WMAs.

The generosity of these lumber companies has made 124,234 acres of wildlife habitat available in southwest Louisiana for use by the public for hunting and other outdoor activities.

Aycock Named Agent of Year

Region II Wildlife Agent Ken Aycock was posthumously awarded the "Wildlife Agent of the Year" award at the Louisiana Wildlife Agents Association annual convention July 27 in Baton Rouge.

Aycock died in the line of duty July 6 while on patrol on the Ouachita River. His empty 14-foot boat was found by a fisherman and his body was recovered by wildlife agents before dawn the following day. Cause of death was declared accidental drowning by the Union Parish coroner.

Services were held at the First Baptist Church in Homer on July 8 with agents from throughout the state in attendance. He is survived by his wife Karen and two sons.

Aycock, 35, had been employed by the Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries since May 1985. He was a graduate of the State Police Training Academy.

A trust fund for Aycock's family has been established in Karen Aycock's name, c/o Homer National Bank, P.O. Box 689, Homer, LA 71040. Contact person is Loy Weaver, 318/927-3543.

LDWF Staffer Wins Award

Wade Byrd, assistant chief of LDWF's Information and Education Division, has been presented an "Outdoor Ethics Communications Award" by the Izaak Walton League of America in cooperation with the Association for Conservation Information. Byrd received the award for "Best Film, 1990" for his TV feature "A Time for Action" about hunter ethics which aired on the *Louisiana Conservationist TV Magazine.*

Dow Donates Duck Boxes: Tom Bradley, Dow Environmental Superintendent and Robert Helm, LDWF Waterfowl Study Leader, display two of 60 wood duck boxes built by Dow employee families and donated to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Bradley developed the program to provide a hands-on project that promotes conservation among employees and their families. This year's effort was so successful that an additional donation of 150 boxes is anticipated later this year. Most of these boxes will be installed on department WMAs as part of an ongoing wood duck box program and will soon be producing ducklings.

Dow is also active in additional areas of wood duck management such as constructing and installing wood duck boxes at their Brine Production facility near Napoleonville. This area supports excellent wetland habitat and has the potential to produce a significant number of ducks annually. Dow also assists the department in its wood duck banding program by providing banding sites and services.

"It is encouraging to see positive contributions such as these to Louisiana's natural resources by a major industrial company," said Helm. "The department appreciates their efforts and challenges other corporations to become involved in conservation efforts."

Turkey Hunters Win Shotguns

Three Louisiana turkey hunters have received new shotguns as a reward for taking part in a biological information program conducted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Their names were drawn by lot from among hundreds of hunters who cooperated in the project during this spring's turkey hunting season. Participants took bagged gobblers to one of the more than 200 check stations scattered across the state to be weighed, measured and otherwise examined for biological data.

Hugh Bateman, administrator of the Game Division, said that 1,317 birds were checked, representing about 25 percent of the total harvest. Last year 1,520 turkeys were checked.

Winners of the shotguns were T.W. Thompson of Jackson, Steve Gottschalck of Hammond and Tommy Smith of Mansfield.

The shotguns were donated by the Tri-Parish, Cenla and North-Central chapters of the Louisiana Wild Turkey Federation.

Report Swallow-Tailed Kites

If you have ever seen an American swallow-tailed kite, you will probably recall its graceful movements and beautiful outline. This kite's silhouette is unmistakable with its long pointed wings and its long, deeply forked tail. The bird appears white from underneath with black edgings to the wings and tail.

These birds migrate here in the spring, establish nests by the summer and migrate back to South America with their newly fledged young in the fall.

As elsewhere in the United States, the swallow-tailed kite has experienced a notable decline in Louisiana. It is now listed as critically imperiled by the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program.

Thus, the Louisiana Nature and Science Center has embarked on an intense study which will include a thorough population census of swallow-tailed kites in the Pearl River Basin and limited censusing in other parts of the state. The project is funded by the department's Louisiana Natural Heritage Program.

Your help is needed. Please report any Louisiana sightings of the American swallow-tailed kite to:

Jennifer Coulson
Louisiana Nature and Science Center
P. 0. Box 870610
New Orleans, LA 70187-0610
(504) 246-5672

Please note the exact date, location, time of day, direction of flight, and if possible, include weather conditions and bird behavior.

Visitors Leave Touch of Beauty

Thirty-four young French visitors to Louisiana have left a touch of beauty for the state to remember them by.

At Lake Martin in St. Martin Parish, the altruistic group spent July 22-26 planting irises and clearing undesired vegetation from selected areas of the bank in order to increase opportunities for fishing and sightseeing.

The project was coordinated by Bill Vermillion, nongame biologist for LDWF's Natural Heritage Program. The French party, consisting of 22 young women and 12 young men aged 16 to 20 accompanied by five adults, represented an organization called Acte Vert from the town of Verrieres le Buisson.

Acte Vert conducts aid programs for senior citizens. As a reward, the volunteers are sent on a trip abroad. The French youths arrived in New Orleans on July 12, made the rounds of the Crescent City the next day, and then toured extensively in the south Louisiana Cajun country.

Thistlethwaite Lottery in Store

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has approved a lottery system to control the number of deer hunters participating in each of two days of either-sex hunting at Thistlethwaite Wildlife Management Area.

At its regular meeting in June, the commissioners instructed A. Kell McInnis III, LDWF acting secretary, to develop such a plan.

Under a plan proposed by LDWF Game Chief Hugh Bateman, the lottery would restrict to 700 the number of hunters permitted to take part in the managed hunt scheduled for Friday, Nov. 29, and also 700 for the hunt Saturday, Dec. 7.

The purpose of the lottery, Bateman said, is to prevent a recurrence of the crush of 1,500 hunters that showed up on an either-sex day last year. Thistlethwaite WMA, northeast of Opelousas, covers just 11,100 acres.

Hunters wishing to take part in the lottery, regardless of age, would be required to submit an application form by Sept. 30. Each form carries a nonrefundable $5 administrative fee.

Applications may be submitted individually or in groups of no more than five hunters. The drawing will be held in early October, and successful candidates will be notified by mail.

Application forms are available at all LDWF offices.

Kisatchie Forest Cited: LDWF Acting Secretary A. Kell McInnis III (left) presents a plaque of appreciation from the department and The Nature Conservancy jointly recognizing Kisatchie National Forest for its cooperation in protecting unique biological areas. Danny Britt, supervisor of the 600,000-acre national park, accepts the plaque. The occasion marked the addition of Sheard Branch Boulders and Sheard Branch Sandstone Barrens as registered natural areas within the Kisatchie District, to be managed and protected according to a management plan developed by LDWF's Natural Heritage Program.

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Bayou Kitchen

by Wayne Miller

Photograph by Ken Glaser

Dove & Mushroom Pie

6-8 doves
1 tablespoon flour
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon thyme
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
3/4 cup carrots, thinly sliced
1 pound mushrooms, quartered
1 1/2 cups chicken stock (approx.)
2 ounces sherry
4 tablespoons prepared roux

Prepared pastry dough

Clean and cut doves into small pieces of about two inches in length. Dredge with the flour and salt and pepper to taste. Saute in oilve oil until brown. Remove doves and set aside. Add onions, green pepper and carrots to saute pan in remaining oil from doves. Cook until carrots are nearly done and onions are transparent. Add roux, thyme and parsley. Mix well. Add chicken stock and sherry. Continue to cook until mixture comes to boil. Return doves to pan. Reduce heat. Add mushrooms and cook on low heat for an additional three minutes. Mixture will be thick. Adjustment can be made with the addition of either broth or roux. Remove from heat.

Prepare deep baking dish or casserole with bottom crust. Bake bottom crust at 350 degrees until golden brown and allow to cool. (Be sure to prick crust to prevent bubbles.)

Fill dish and prepared crust with cooked dove mixture. Add top crust. After brushing unbaked and vented top crust with egg and milk, return completed pie to 350-degree oven and bake for approximately 30 minutes or until top crust is brown and filling is bubbling hot. Serves 6.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The dove recipes appearing in this issue represent two famous creole dishes. They make superb holiday offering. Frozen doves work well in both.

Dove & Green Peas

4-6 doves
1 pint green peas (fresh/frozen)
1/2 pound ham, minced
2 onions, sliced
1 tablespoon butter
1 bay leaf
1 clove garlic, minced
3/4 cup consomme or broth
1/2 teaspoon thyme

Clean doves leaving them whole, as you would for roasting. Rub doves with salt and pepper inside and out. Truss them. Set aside. Place onion slices in saucepan with butter. Allow the onions to brown slightly. Place doves on top of onions. Cover pan and begin to smother (about 10 minutes.) Add minced ham and thyme, garlic and bayleaf. Smother very slowly for 10 or 15 minutes. When browned, add consomme or broth and peas. Cover and allow to simmer on low for one hour. Serve on platter placing doves in center and heaping the peas around them in true Creole style. Serves 4.